

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 TRSE-00 CU-02
/089 W

-----151127Z 087972 /22

R 150855Z APR 77

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4456

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0307

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ET

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MISSIONARIES TO LEAVE KEREN

1. NINE FOREIGN MISSIONARIES AND DEPENDENTS HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED
TO LEAVE KEREN.

2. IN A LETTER EARLY APRIL, GUNNAR SWENSON, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE SWEDISH EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN STOCKHOLM STRONGLY URGED
GUNNAR GOMER, THE SENIOR MEMBER OF THE SWEDISH EVANGELICAL
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MISSION (SEM) SERVING WITH THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF ERITREA (ECE)
IN KEREN, TO RECONSIDER HIS DECISION TO STAY IN KEREN. AT A
MINIMUM, THE LETTER URGED THAT THE WIVES AND CHILDREN BE EVACUATED
IMMEDIATELY, SHORTLY THEREAFTER, THE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE
SECREATRY OF THE ECE BY JOINT LETTER INSTRUCTED THE ERITREAN
PRINCIPAL OF THE DEAF SCHOOL AT WHICH THE SEM MISSIONARIES WORK,
TO CLOSE THE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY AND TO DISMISS ALL THE STUDENTS.

AS MOST OF THE STUDENTS AND STAFF ARE FROM ASMARA AND HAMASIEN PROVINCE, IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE 50 OR SO MISSIONARIES, DEPENDENTS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS WILL BEGIN THEIR EFFORTS TO RETURN TO ASMARA LATER THIS MONTH. THE SEM GROUP IN KEREN IS AS FOLLOWS: TWO FINNS, BOTH ADULTS; FIVE SWEDES, TWO ADULTS AND THREE CHILDREN. BECAUSE OF POOR MAIL SERVICE AND NO TELECOMMUNICATIONS LINK, THERE HAS BEEN NO REACTION FROM GOMER CONCERNING THE SEM GROUP'S PLANS TO LEAVE KEREN.

3. AT THE MOMENT THERE ARE NO DOMESTIC ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS IN ERITREA AS THE 2-3 DC-3S NORMALLY SERVING THE REGION HAVE BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE EPMG MILITARY. IT IS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT THESE AIRCRAFT MAY BE USED TO REMOVE THE MISSIONARIES FROM KEREN AS THE FLOW OF FREIGHT AND PASSENGERS IS PREPONDERANTLY OUTBOUND FROM ASMARA IN SUPPORT OF THE REPORTED 7000 EPMG TROOPS IN KEREN. HAVING FAILED TO HOLD AFABET AND HAVING ABANDONED ELABERET, THESE TROOPS CLEARLY ANTICIPATE INCREASING INSURGENT PRESSURES AGAINST KEREN. THEY HAVE ALREADY BEGUN IMPROVING EXISTING FORTIFICATIONS AND ARE DIGGING NEW POSITIONS IN THE HILLS AROUND THE CITY.

4. AS A COROLLARY TO THE EVACUATION OF THE SEVEN SEM MISSIONARIES AND DEPENDENTS, THE MIDDLE EAST GENERAL MISSION DIRECTOR IN ASMARA HAS ALSO INSTRUCTED HIS TWO BRITISH CITIZEN MISSIONARIES TO LEAVE KEREN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

5. FOR ADDIS: REQUEST THAT YOU INFORM THE BRITISH, SWEDISH AND FINNISH EMBASSIES OF THE INTENTIONS OF THESE MISSIONARIES. THE CONGEN HAS OFFERED TO PROVIDE WHATEVER ASSISTANCE IT CAN TO
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FACILITATE THE EVACUATION OF THESE MISSIONARIES VIA EAL.
SLUTZ

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Message Attributes

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